

Report on the Assessment
Tipp City, Ohio
April 21, 2005

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Acknowledgments

The assessment team met with a variety of individuals and organizations while in the City of Tipp City, Ohio. We appreciate the time and opinions of each individual involved in the assessment. Special thanks goes to Vicky Lowery and Ruth Safreed for coordinating arrangements, and providing background materials.

Thanks also goes to those attending the public meeting held during the assessment.

Introduction

Downtown Ohio, Inc. Downtown Assessment Resource Team spent one and a half days (April 20 & 21, 2005) in the City of Tipp City to assess the downtown district's revitalization needs and opportunities. The assessment process had several functions:

- To identify some of the commercial district's major challenges, opportunities, and needs;
- To provide community members with information about the Main Street approach to commercial district revitalization;
- To learn whether the Main Street Approach is an appropriate strategy for the City of Tipp City; and
- To determine Tipp City's readiness and potential to embrace the Main Street program.

The assessment team included:

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Lorna Swisher, Executive Director,
Mainstreet Piqua, Inc.

Chuck Fox, Executive Director
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The team formed its comments, observations and recommendations based on documents, personal interviews, meetings with community leaders, walking and driving tours through the downtown district of Tipp City, and the team's own experience in working with local programs and community development corporations throughout the state of Ohio.

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National Main Street Center

The National Main Street Center (NMSC) is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust). Created by a Congressional Charter in 1949, the National Trust is a nonprofit organization with over 275,000 members. As a leading advocate of historic preservation in the United States, the National Trust is committed to saving America's diverse historic environments and to preserving and revitalizing the livability of communities nationwide. Economic growth, urban revitalization, and the creation of new jobs are all issues the National Trust addresses through the rehabilitation of historic resources.

Established in 1980 by the National Trust, the NMSC helps communities of all sizes to revitalize their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. More than 1,700 towns and cities in 43 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have participated in Main Street's comprehensive commercial revitalization program. During this time, approximately \$12.8 billion has been reinvested in Main Street commercial districts, creating 193,000 net new jobs, 51,000 net new businesses, and spurring more than 62,000 building rehabilitation projects. Participating communities have leveraged more than \$38.34 in new investment for every dollar used to support the local revitalization effort – a reinvestment ratio that makes the Main Street program one of the most successful economic development strategies in the nation. The NMSC also sponsors the National Main Street Network™, a professional membership program for organizations interested in commercial revitalization. It produces publications, newsletters and special reports on revitalization and preservation issues and serves as a clearinghouse for information on community development issues. The NMSC accomplishes its mission through the Main Street Four-Point Approach™.

A Comprehensive Approach to Revitalization

The Main Street Program assists local partners to plan and implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy for their commercial districts. The foundation of the "Four Point" or "Main Street Approach" to downtown revitalization is preservation: using those elements of quality that have survived as assets upon which we can build a lasting, positive physical and emotional image for everyone who uses downtown. Historic Preservation is used as an economic development tool. It capitalizes on over-looked and underutilized assets, encourages imagination, sharpening of entrepreneurial skills and strong participation by the private sector.

The Four-Point Approach

The four point methodology works to create a total image for the community: Providing the retail/professional area with its necessary market niche, creating a cohesive visual identity unique to the community, and nurturing a cultural ambiance associated with the community's location, appearance, and way of life. The Main Street Approach gradually builds on existing resources and fosters improved community leadership and support on behalf of the Central Business District for the long term.

- **Organization** is the building of consensus and cooperation between the groups that play a role in the downtown. Many individuals and organizations in the community have a stake in the economic viability of the downtown.
- **Design** involves improving the downtown's image by improving its physical appearance – not just the appearance of buildings, but also of street lights, window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, streetscapes, landscaping, promotional materials and all other elements that convey a visual message about what the downtown is and what it has to offer.
- **Promotion** involves marketing the downtown's unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others. Effective promotion creates a positive image of the downtown through retail promotional activity and special events utilizing the downtown as a stage area of community activities.
- **Economic Restructuring** involves strengthening the existing economic base of the downtown while diversifying it. Economic Restructuring activities include helping existing downtown businesses expand, recruiting new businesses, providing a balanced mix, converting unused space into productive property, and sharpening the competitiveness of downtown merchants.

The Eight Principles of Main Street

While the Main Street approach provides the format for successful revitalization, implementation of the four-point approach is based on eight principles that pertain to all areas of the revitalization effort:

1. **Comprehensive.** Commercial district revitalization is a complex process and cannot be accomplished through a single project. For successful and lasting results, a comprehensive approach must be used. Simply stated, *comprehensive* means working on all four points simultaneously.
2. **Incremental.** Small projects and simple activities lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the revitalization process and help develop skills so that more complex problems can be addressed and more ambitious projects undertaken. Starting with small projects creates progress and momentum at the same time.
3. **Self-help.** Local leaders must have the desire and the will to make the project successful. The NMSC provides direction, ideas and training; but continued and long-term success depends upon the involvement and commitment of the community.
4. **Public/Private Partnerships.** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the economic health and physical stability of the district. Each sector has a role to play, and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations so that an effective partnership can be forged.
5. **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities – like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging or businesses that have become local institutions. Main Street cannot create new landmarks or institutions; existing local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
6. **Quality.** Quality must be emphasized in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies equally to each element of the program, from storefront design to promotional campaigns to educational programs.
7. **Change.** Changes in attitude and practice are necessary to improve current economic conditions. Public support for change will build as the program grows.
8. **Implementation-Oriented.** Activity creates confidence in the program and greater levels of participation. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization process is under way. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger activities as the revitalization effort matures.

Downtown Ohio, Inc.

Downtown Ohio, Inc. (DOI) is a non-profit corporation organized to encourage development, redevelopment, and improvement of downtown areas throughout Ohio.

DOI is the state-coordinating program for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Main Street" program in the State of Ohio. Since incorporation as a non-profit statewide organization in 1989, membership in DOI has increased to include over three hundred (300) cities, organizations, consultants, and downtown development professionals throughout the State of Ohio. The Board is dedicated to a statewide downtown revitalization program, and continues to work toward assisting self-motivated communities of all sizes. Downtown Ohio, Inc. provides technical assistance, training, and networking in all facets of downtown development.

The Board of Trustees for DOI is composed of thirteen members, including an ex-officio member from the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. They represent a broad-based group of downtown professionals from small, medium and large cities throughout the State.

DOI is a member of the International Downtown Association (IDA) and the National Main Street Network. DOI also links its technical assistance services with the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) in two ways. First, DOI is working with the Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (OHCP) to develop fundable downtown-related projects in those communities interested in applying for the Downtown Revitalization Competitive Grant Program, Economic Development Loan Program, local Economic Development Revolving Loan Funds, and the Home Program. Second, DOI will act as a conduit for other ODOD programs and resources and as an advocate for downtown revitalization issues related to ODOD.

Through a Membership Network Directory developed by DOI, members have the opportunity to share knowledge, common experiences, and problems concerning management, planning and development in downtown areas. DOI holds up to three conferences per year with the annual meeting held in Columbus. Conferences focus on up-to-date downtown revitalization techniques and feature presentations from regional and/or nationally known speakers. A wide variety of downtown issues have been explored, including such topics as: competing with Wal-Mart; Special Improvement Districts; architectural design standards; parking; dealing with "white elephants"; and retail recruitment. DOI members also receive reduced rates for conference registration and Windows, an informational newsletter.

Ohio Main Street Program

Main Street is a comprehensive revitalization program that promotes historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts.

Established in 1997, the Ohio Main Street Program, administered by Downtown Ohio, Inc., is dedicated to empowering each community within the state to maintain, strengthen and revitalize the unique physical, economic, historical and cultural characteristics of its own Downtown or City center.

Each year the Ohio Main Street Program will select demonstration communities on a competitive basis to become official state Main Street projects. These communities will receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Street to centers of community activity and commerce. Communities selected to participate in the Ohio Main Street Program will receive three years of technical assistance, including:

- Volunteer and program manager training
- Advanced training on specific Downtown issues, such as marketing and promotion, business recruitment, volunteer development, market analysis, design, historic preservation and fundraising.
- On-site visits to help each community develop its strengths and plan for success
- Materials such as manuals and slide programs
- Linkages to other national and state Main Street communities
- When a community participates in the revitalization effort, its Downtown will experience renewed vitality and enhanced economic performance. Benefits of the Main Street Program include:
 - Protecting and strengthening the existing tax base
 - Increasing sales and returning revenues to the community
 - Creating a positive community image
 - Creating visually appealing and functional buildings
 - Attracting new businesses
 - Developing new housing opportunities in historic buildings
 - Creating new jobs
 - Increasing investment in the Downtown
 - Preserving historic resources

Organization

ORGANIZATION

A strong organization is the cornerstone of a successful revitalization program. Without the strong foundation a good organization provides, all other projects, however well intentioned, will falter.

Observations

The following describes the Resource Team's observations of the organizational situation in Tipp City.

1. Tipp City has a strong sense of community, in a small town it may not be logical for a separate organization to be established, the downtown revitalization program may be 'housed' by the Chamber.
2. The community has an updated Comprehensive Plan from 2003
3. Proximity to Dayton is an asset, as there is a large market near-by from which to draw, certainly close enough for an easy 'get-away' to Tipp City.
4. Not much of a relationship prevalent between many successful industries and the downtown.
5. The town is polarized by personalities in the downtown area. Many, not just one. Either a great mediation process needs to be attempted, or you just move forward. Regardless, effective communication will be at the forefront of what ever you decide to do.
6. The city offices are no longer located downtown. The post office has moved out. Involve Tipp-Monroe Community Services, Township offices and the Library such that their identity is "downtown."
7. Many of the community's "Strengths" relate to the historic architecture, and history of the area. Are the decisions being made today capitalizing upon those strengths? Match words to actions. It is simple to let history erode when people begin to rationalize. Progress is not synonymous with *new*.
8. Protection of your historical assets should be of primary concern, because if they go, then what do you have left? The history and building are character-defining features of Tipp City. The density is critical; taking out a few here and there would be absolutely detrimental.

9. A formalized downtown organization can give everyone a voice. It came up several times during our visit the “if it ain’t broke why fix it?” quite frankly it is broke. Currently, the community as a whole does not have a voice in the communication process. We observed that the decision making process is not equitable. The current polarization is counter-productive to sustained revitalization.

The Main Street approach recommends goals for the Organization committee to cover broad areas: Fundraising: membership; Communications; Staff and Financial Resources; Volunteer Management: board development.

Fundraising

1. **Funding** Review your financial support plan to reflect a balance of 1/3 public funds, 1/3 private funds, 1/3 other resources-- grants/foundations, special fundraisers.
2. **Budget** Developing sustainable financial support is crucial to an ongoing revitalization effort. This is not a short-term project; you must plan for it to be operating for the next 50 years and beyond.
3. **Government** participation is critical, as this is a partnership and many of your goals will involve public infrastructure, not private building/business owners alone. The county, city, and township should be approached for program support. The presentation should demonstrate the commitment of industry, businesses, and community volunteers that will be brought in to support the project, as well as the goals that will effectively work to increase property tax base and income tax in your community. You will remain accountable by providing regular reports of economic statistics, which the Ohio Main Street Program requires in monthly reports. The relationship is a two-way street; you want an appropriation in exchange for community responsibility at work on revitalization
4. **Business Sponsors** Tipp City must make a case to the community industry and businesses to provide on-going financial support. A Case Statement needs to be provided to them so that they see specific attainable goals, results and a reporting system...and possibly board representation. They want a strong viable community for their employees. Another significant partner in Main Street communities is the banking community, who routinely provide program support as well as sponsorship of promotion activities. Many communities have a bank as a sponsor for the Ohio Main Street Program, and they pay

- their \$2,000 dues directly, which in turn gives them year-round publicity for their instrumental supporting role.
5. ***Other Sources*** of support should be investigated such as Foundations; many Main Street communities get substantial annual support from local foundations (i.e. \$20,000). Pursue smaller family foundations as well. Many Main Street communities hold perhaps one major fundraiser a year, these take a wide variety of forms, find one that works for your community:[beer tents at a car show/street party, sponsored brick walks, formal dinner/dance, auctions, merchandise, etc.] Again remember to use your assets.
 6. In-kind gift opportunities from industry and businesses are valuable too--be creative.
 7. The organization committee should have sole power over requests to the community for funding for the revitalization efforts. All committees will have financial needs, but those requests should be in partnership with the existing fundraising efforts so the funders do not get mixed messages from your organization, or conflicting requests and expectations.

Membership

8. The 'steering committee' will have to determine if a membership structure is appropriate for your downtown organization. Perhaps it can be combined with the Chamber. Ordinary citizens might want to be Main Street members, and the typical Chamber dues structure may not fit.
9. If you decide to have a membership structure, don't discount the membership to the level that managing the membership itself is more costly than the fee. Also the benefits for each level of giving will be determined, and a brochure as a membership vehicle will need to be designed, printed, and distributed. Some communities have a business level set fairly high that it also then covers a specified number of cooperative advertising promotions.
10. As you start-up, you will need to have a group of volunteers available for public speaking engagements to service organizations, etc. to get lots of information out to the public. All board members should be required to be members, and all should feel comfortable recruiting gifts and memberships. Members are anyone who cares about Tipp City's core, not just those people in the target area.

Communications

1. The responsibility of the Organization Committee is the communicating of the revitalization efforts, the promotion committee works on the promotion of the downtown itself. Many projects will have some overlap with other committees and will take coordination. The promotion committee will have the expertise to develop an image campaign, which will be a huge benefit, but it falls to the organization committee to see that the revitalization program itself has the presence in the community to succeed. Coordinating the message delivery with the other three committees will be a continuous task, though they may establish a set program within their own committee.
2. The DART report should be presented, via meeting, to the community, with a focus on property owners and retailers/service sector to create ownership with those “on the street.”
3. As many merchants view themselves as disenfranchised in the process, a very good print piece will have to be developed explaining the goals and expectations. And additional meetings to involve the people who have not yet ‘come to the table.’
4. Always provide photo opportunities and press recognition of major donors.
5. Newsletters can communicate with the stakeholders the progress of each of the committees.
6. The local newspaper will be an invaluable partner, and could insert your ‘newsletter’ as a page to reach all of their subscribers
7. Electronic news can quickly disseminate a lot of information. Communicating weekly menu specials or merchandise sales on behalf of the merchants could keep a client list informed of what is happening in Tipp City. (This would be a Promotions Committee responsibility, but the technology may be provided through the Organization’s communication plan)
8. Web-site development. This will be coordinated with all committees, as you will develop a site, which may link to merchants; offer property information to potential tenants; and of course support promotional activities.
9. There is also, obviously, the opportunity to coordinate or share communication tools with Chamber members.

10. The setting and hosting an annual meeting and producing annual report would be typical functions under the organization committee's responsibility.

Staff and Financial Resources

1. Typically it would fall to the revitalization board to hire a manager to run the program. The direct chain of command should be well defined. The hiring, supervision, and personnel policies should also be spelled out, and not assumed. Examples of these policies are available in the DOI Board member handbook. Electronic copies are available on DOI's website: www.downtownohio.org.
2. Financial policies need to be established, as well as the role of the treasurer and any other signatures for disbursements. The types of financial reporting required by the board, the system of budget establishment and authority delegated to committees within their budget expenditures. Will there be audits, are reviews established and in what frequency?

Volunteer Management

1. Who will be responsible to recruit volunteers to work on projects? There needs to be a volunteer system of recruiting, retaining and recognition. Statistics need to be maintained through each committee on volunteer hours logged, and recognition may take a variety of forms, including through the annual meeting/report.

Board Development

2. The Main Street approach is volunteer driven, it comes from the members of the community, both within and outside the boundaries of your Main Street target area.
3. Establish a board of directors
How often will they meet, what are the skills and interests needed to populate this board to maximize the effectiveness? Standardizing the board meeting and the committee structure. A simple program needs to be developed to recruit, retain, and recognize board members. It's important that they understand specifically why they are being recruited to fill a particular need. There must be a working board, and assignments must be spelled out.

Conclusion

If Tipp City believes they would like to join the Ohio Main Street program for their revitalization program, they should understand both the benefits and responsibilities of applying to the program. Applications to the Ohio Main Street Program are due October, letters of intent to apply are due August 1, and someone must attend one of the three 'Call for Application Workshops' that are being offered the third week of June

Establishing the organization that is going to run your revitalization effort is a primary goal. Most Main Street boards file for status as a 501(c) 3, so that they can accept charitable donations. If needed, Downtown Ohio, Inc. can provide examples of articles of incorporation and by-laws from other Main Street communities.

In Tipp City, because of the Chamber, you will need to determine what the appropriate long-term relationship should be.

Promotion

Promotion

As one of the four points of the Main Street Approach, promotion is essential to the success of the revitalization effort. It describes the progress and vitality of the central business district to the general public; including investors, shoppers, visitors, and residents. It also describes the success of the revitalization program by providing a communication link between the revitalization program and the public. Raising the level of awareness of your downtown district is key to the success of the businesses and the district as a whole as well as projecting a positive image for the entire City of Tipp City. Creating an overall marketing and promotions program directed at your target markets will help increase awareness and bring new customers to the region. The basic work of a Promotions Committee has to do with: Image Development; Retail Promotions; Special Events; and Heritage Tourism Development. The balance of these four areas will create a full agenda for activities in Tipp City.

A thorough, annual comprehensive promotion program needs to be developed; a promotion committee should be created and should meet on a monthly basis.

Observations and Recommendations

The following describes the Resource Team's observations of the promotional situation in Tipp City.

Observation: Most of the promotional effort is the product of one person who has a long time history to Tipp City's revitalization effort and whose commitment to the Main Street approach is unknown.

Recommendation: The promotional effort needs to be planned, with all the stakeholders having a part in all the activities. A promotions committee needs to be formed to plan and coordinate the promotional efforts to benefit ALL who have a stake in the downtown area.

Observation: The community does not really own the Heritage Tourism aspect of the city.

Recommendation: The city has a number of historical aspects (e.g. the canal lock, historical buildings and canal era history) that need to be tied together and used by the downtown area. Develop a promotional activity that re-acquaints businesses and property owners and residents with the architectural history of the entire downtown district. Include historic photographs of buildings and proposed architectural renderings of the buildings and publicize them in storefront windows, and the local newspaper. Some type of permanent display of these items would be a great addition to the retail spaces. This may also be a good idea for service businesses to enhance their display windows.

Observation: The city has several businesses near the downtown that are great destinations but need to be linked to the downtown area.

Recommendation: Look at ways to partner with Fulton Farms, Trophy Nut and Spring Hill to cross-promote the downtown and these unique businesses. These businesses already have a regional identity and a partnership is needed to help promote the downtown as a regional destination.

Observation: The city needs to have a consistent image to present to the region.

Recommendations: The downtown area needs to have its own identity, image, branding and promotional program that differentiates it in the market. A marketing program complete with a logo and a branding campaign should be created. This marketing program should have a professional look and promote the existing businesses and services the downtown has as a whole entity; a destination. A thorough, comprehensive promotion program needs to be developed and dues need to be established that will enable a proper budget. A promotion committee should be established and should meet monthly. Coordinating the image through advertisements to shopping bags to streetscape will “brand” Tipp City.

Observation: There is no website or part of a website that could be found that spoke about the Downtown, showed pictures, highlighted businesses or business owners, showed available space (including photos), events, restaurants, etc.

Recommendation: A separate page/s on the city’s or chamber’s current websites could be added or a stand-alone site needs to be created for this purpose. Many people who take day trips use the Internet to plan their visits before leaving home. This is very important for the future if you are interested in building the visitor market. Make sure the information on the site sets Tipp City’s downtown apart from anywhere else!

Observation: One of Tipp City’s biggest strengths is the number of businesses that are already located within the downtown or business district. What is lacking is the sense of “unity”. It appears as though every business is doing fairly well, there is no central connection to get promotions started.

Recommendation: Form a committee that would serve as a promotions committee. When selecting a committee make sure to include not only businesses owners, but the general public as well. This could be, but not limited to, residents, former residents, young people, and retired individuals. Have as many business owners as possible donate time and monies to show commitment to a revitalized downtown. A downtown business website would also

be helpful. This website should be updated frequently and list such items as specials, coupons or other incentives to get people to your district.

Additional Recommendations

1. Consider looking for additional opportunities to either create or expand current special events in the downtown.
2. Downtown Tipp City should explore joint marketing opportunities and promotional efforts through the media.
3. Lack of utilization of market information. A comprehensive market analysis should be updated for the district within one year. Since most market data has a lifespan of five years, it is not too early to begin updating the information now. It will help to develop a comprehensive promotional strategy that will be effective in the long term and can address the many target market opportunities. The analysis can be completed by community volunteers with information that is readily available from local resources that will answer the questions of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW? On-the-Street surveys that collect zip-code information will help to give you an idea of what your trade-area is.
4. Complete a market analysis for the entire downtown Tipp City district. This step could be accomplished through local volunteers and local government support. The National Main Street Center has a very helpful easy to follow step-by-step guide for local volunteers to complete a market analysis. There are also some great online data collection tools. InfoUSA.com, experian, MicrosoftbCentral, Switchboard.com, Claritas, and GoLeads, are a few you could research and use. Microsoft has an excellent program called Mappoint that can help with census and GIS information. The data can be used by the Promotions Committee to develop target-market promotions, and also by the Economic Restructuring Committee for retention and recruitment purposes. A summary of this information should be provided to every business and property owner in the district so that they can utilize the information to identify individual target markets for direct mail promotions. Once you have demographic and market analysis information, the Promotions Committee can begin to identify target market.
5. Using your market data and working with your downtown business owners, create an e-mail list of visitors and customers for future

promotions, newsletter mailing list, or e-mail newsletter list. This is a cheap way to drum up a great customer base.

6. Try and implement a “Tipp City” gift card. The DART team noticed that most businesses in the district accept the “Do Toledo” gift cards. While this is a good promotional item, one specifically for Tipp City would only increase your chances of notoriety.
7. Special Events-Continue strengthening existing festivals and events. Complete an 18-month Calendar of Events so that it can be readily available for business prospects, recruitment packages, customers, and visitors. This will also be helpful in planning future events/promotions and help to not overlap with other community events.

Conclusion

There are many resources and examples to help you develop the best Promotion Program for Tipp City including: Downtown Ohio, Inc; the National Main Street Center; the other Main Streets in the area; various websites; and other community’s examples. Take advantage of these resources!

Economic Restructuring

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

Economic restructuring is a long-term process to strengthen the community's downtown core of existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. This is normally accomplished by retaining and expanding existing business, recruiting new business to provide a balanced commercial mix, converting underutilized and vacant space into productive new uses, and sharpening the entrepreneurial skills of merchants. Economic restructuring will be an on-going task for Tipp City.

Observations

The following describes the Resource Team's observations of the economic conditions of Tipp City.

1. Tipp City is a growing community with a vibrant downtown and a high occupancy rate.
2. Tipp City has a strong base of retail but a fairly limited variety of businesses. The downtown business community should seek compatible businesses but avoid recruiting businesses that have the same variety of products and inventory.
3. The existing downtown businesses are well established and even start-ups seem to be well run.
4. An inventory of downtown buildings, their location, condition and availability for purchase or rental is needed. Similarly, an inventory of existing businesses is needed so that an assessment of the existing business mix can be made. This inventory will identify 'gaps' and assist in the development of a recruitment plan.
5. The downtown area is "pedestrian friendly" and while the completed pilot project of streetscape improvements is attractive every effort should be made to continue those improvements into the rest of the downtown.
6. Tipp City has some wonderful destination businesses including an excellent restaurant that has regional appeal however the boundaries of the downtown are quite small and those boundaries should be expanded to reach the full length of Main Street. All businesses in the commercial core should be fully utilized.
7. Downtown Tipp City's proximity to I-75 is key to the vitality of the community. Efforts must be made to pull those interstate travelers

- into the downtown community. Additionally while Tipp City has little ‘big-box’ competition for the downtown the community is conveniently located near Huber Heights and Troy – making it easy for shoppers to move easily to other shopping destinations.
8. Tipp City, unlike many downtowns, has a vibrant grocery store. This asset should be heavily promoted.
 9. The Tipp City Library, Monroe Township Community building and other key institutions are located in or near the downtown area. These organizations provide stability and focal points for efforts to revitalize the central business district.
 10. A business recruitment package is needed with incentives to market the property and buildings as they become available in downtown Tipp City.
 11. The City of Tipp City and some local business leaders appear to be enthusiastic about, and supportive of, efforts to create a long term and comprehensive downtown revitalization organization but efforts must be made to include as many downtown stakeholders as possible, for this effort to be truly successful.
 12. There is a huge potential for second-story development within the district. Some housing does exist, which is a positive. However, this could be increased, as well as other uses considered for these upper floor vacant spaces.
 13. Tipp City is a very residential city. The close proximity of the residential district to the downtown district means that a large population of residents is within easy walking distance of the downtown. This should help to support an equally diverse retail market.
 14. The ‘business incubator’ concept appears to have worked well in downtown Tipp City. The opportunity for a variety of different ‘potential’ business owners to have the opportunity to start their businesses in this manner is truly unique and should be supported.
 15. There are limited entertainment options in downtown Tipp City. The redevelopment of the former Paddy’s Restaurant may address this concern but should be considered.

Recommendations

The following recommendations should be considered and, when adopted, communicated to all interested parties.

1. Start a dialogue within the community about the importance of the central business district to Tipp City, with the goal of developing a shared, comprehensive vision for a revitalized downtown area.
2. Form an economic restructuring committee, with responsibility for overseeing business retention, recruitment and expansion programs to insure the vitality of the downtown business district. The committee should be the clearinghouse for all information about Tipp City's downtown revitalization effort.
3. The economic restructuring committee will need training and resources to be successful. Consider participating in the Ohio Main Street program. The program provides a solid foundation of comprehensive training, continuing guidance, evaluations and feedback that are important for an ongoing economic restructuring effort.
4. Work with property owners to improve the maintenance and appearance of buildings in the downtown area. While the front façades of most buildings in the downtown area are attractive the rear of some of the buildings are in need of some attention.
5. Tipp City's historic buildings may be the downtown's most valuable asset. Every effort should be made to preserve and protect these structures.
6. Heritage and cultural tourism could be an economic engine for Tipp City. Visitors love to visit and spend time and money in communities that are authentic, charming, welcoming and entertaining.
7. As local residents learn more about the unique heritage of Tipp City, community pride increases. Promoting Tipp City's heritage will provide an opportunity for the community to develop a comprehensive image and effectively market both downtown and community strengths. The Tippecanoe Historical Society appears to be a willing partner in the endeavor.
8. Develop educational opportunities to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of local business people. Join with existing programs or

organizations such as the Small Business Development Center at the Upper Valley JVS.

9. Conduct an inventory of existing buildings, their location, condition and availability for purchase or rental. Make the inventory available to local government, local realtors and the Chamber of Commerce and other places that potential businesses might look when considering future business locations.
10. Conduct an inventory of existing businesses to determine the existing business mix in the downtown area. Prepare a plan to achieve a diversified business mix in the downtown that meets community and visitor needs and expectations.
11. Conduct a survey of local businesses to determine the local business climate including costs of doing business in the community, pending business expansion or reduction plans.
12. A market study analysis should be performed to determine the potential for new and appropriate businesses while assisting existing business to expand.
13. Review available funding opportunities with the City and the Ohio Department of Development. There are a number of grant programs and local funding strategies that can be used for business development and downtown revitalization efforts.
14. Review the local zoning ordinance to determine if local codes truly reflect the realities of downtown redevelopment. For successful upper floor development to take place there needs to be some flexibility with the building codes. It appears the city, with its recent decision to waive the parking restrictions for the banquet facility on the second floor of the Paddy's Restaurant location, may be amenable to discussing this issue.
15. Try to streamline the local business permitting process as much as possible, without giving up necessary control. How difficult is it for a new business to obtain an occupancy permit or a sign permit? How long does the process take, and how many different agencies are involved?

Conclusion

We were impressed with the enthusiasm and support for downtown revitalization efforts that is evident in Tipp City. It is important that this energy be focused in an organized program that can be sustained over time. The success of the program will depend in part upon the resources the community is willing to commit to the process. Securing these commitments and taking the time to build a strong, viable organization is the first step towards continuing the revitalization of downtown Tipp City.

DESIGN

DESIGN

Good design is more than just the appearance of Tipp City's storefronts. Design refers to all of the visual aspects of the business district, from buildings and pedestrian areas, to merchandising and advertising graphics used in promotion. A consistently high level of quality in all aspects of design will improve local attitudes towards revitalization.

Observations

The following describes the Resource Team's observations of the design elements within the downtown district of Tipp City.

1. There is limited understanding of the opportunities of a National Register Historic District
2. The Restoration Board needs a public education campaign, and excellent guidelines, which the downtown revitalization committee could help produce, market and distribute, so that building owners and businesses are likely to be familiar with expectations long before they need to use the process.
3. Restoration Board has become as CLG community. Excellent move. Take advantage of the educational opportunities.
4. For having a nationally known nursery in your community, it's a well-kept secret; they should be a major player.
5. Community needs to understand the importance of historic resources and what historic integrity means in relationship to them.
6. Recent demolition is a bad omen, the preservation ethic isn't understood
7. Third Street and Main is the primary downtown entry, and to have two of the four corners be parking lots, is not good. Buildings should front the street, and parking lots should be to the rear
8. Some buildings have serious deterioration issues

Recommendations

The Main street approach recommends goals for the design committee to cover education and technical assistance; public improvement programs; and private improvement programs. Subcommittees can be established within the design committee to assure that projects are being conducted in all areas

Education and Technical Assistance

1. A building condition Assessment program could be very helpful. There are examples of deteriorated buildings, are the owners aware? Are they prioritizing what needs to be done, are there financial incentives to help.
2. A formalized youth education program could be partnered with schools and Tipp-Monroe Community Resources. Work with schools to coordinate architectural history (art class) using your own community assets. There are some great examples of community coloring books that incorporate local history. Also, photo and art contests are a good way to get the youth involved. All ages can and should be involved
3. Educate the community about the 10% and 20% tax credits available for historic rehabilitations.
4. Sponsor lecture or workshop series to help people understand what historic preservation can do for your community
5. Walking tour needs update, with high quality photos or drawings. Another possible CLG grant project
6. Develop guided walking tours for Saturday or Sunday mornings or coordinated with other festival activities. You could develop a special Sunday morning program with churches for after services in the summer.
7. Work on a monthly feature in the newspaper about a downtown buildings, with before/after picture and a description of the building. Partner with historical society
8. Publicize and highlight the good work that has been done. Develop a local awards program. Make sure you are awarding to appropriate design and good rehabilitation practices.

Public Improvements

9. Great opportunity to work with the city in prioritizing and choosing streetscape improvements. Gives ownership to the community. Fun community presentation at the library
10. Help Restoration Board create Design Guidelines that feature simple 'good' 'bad' examples. Excellent CLG grant opportunity. Work for annual distribution and education for building owners

11. Coordinate flower program, obvious partnership to work with nursery and local garden groups.
12. A banner program could be a really special with so many artists. Definitely not the type of town that should be ordering stock banners!

Private Improvements

13. Create rehabilitation grant or loan program. Create a program that is easy to use, and can really help owners. Targeted fundraisers for this to support this cause may be effective
14. Establish discount program with local hardware/paint dealer. For downtown district subject to design review boundaries. Sherwin Williams likes putting this type of program together, discount offered from their “historic color palette”
15. Work together to establish a process for building owners to get good advice.



One of the most potential attractive buildings on the street looks awful. This is also a major entry point to downtown. The Township should set the example by showing that their presence is important to the community and not a visual detriment to the downtown.



This is an excellent example of merchandising to the street; the awning is unique and delightful, without being literally historic. The two sections of prismatic glass would be better if the whole frieze was re-filled



Another example of a sign not being literally historic, yet intriguing and draws curious street traffic in. When your community has many artistic people, some artistic license will come with that. Any sign ordinance must look at the potential distraction from historic integrity (i.e. flashing neon lights). Do not be so rigid that you extinguish creativity when creativity is what you are marketing in your shops



This is an example of an addition that overwhelms the original historic structure



Work together to allow back entrances to be as beautiful as front entrances



This building shows some serious deterioration in the masonry.



This is a significant historic structure to the community. Work with building owner to help. How can this building continue to contribute to the goals of downtown revitalization efforts?



Add colorful banners and possibly season flower baskets to the district to make it more eye catching.

Attachments

Tipp City Strengths and Weaknesses Assessment

Participants at the DART visit were asked what they felt the strengths and weaknesses were for all of Tipp City. They were then asked to revisit these lists and determine which were the most important to the downtown district. Each participant was allowed to vote for five strengths and five weaknesses. Downtown revitalization plans should take into account what assets and what challenges should be prioritized.

The group also was asked to define the boundaries for “downtown” Tipp City. The Main Street Approach focuses on a manageable target area, though participants and supporters will be included from the surrounding geographic region.

Strengths

Proximity to I-75	8
Tipp Monroe Community Service	6
Schools	5
Parks/Swimming pool	5
Low crime rate	5
Small concentrated area/walkable	5
Historic Building Stock	5
Community Nights	4
No parking meters/parking on both sides street	4
Mum Festival, Car Show, Winter Gathering	3
People (friendly)	2
Intact streetscape-parking	2
Low taxes/low utilities	2
Efficient/good gov't services (police)	2
Low downtown vacancy	2
Low absentee landlords	2
Demographics- high income/high education	1
Historical Society	1
Restoration Board (1974 Restoration District)	1
Monroe Township building	1
Proximity to airport	1
Safe	1
Good relationship between city/twp.	1
Canal	1
Specialty retail- viable	1
Architecture	1
Well used library	1
Tipp City Foundation	1
Great residential	1
Bikeway	1
Tipp City Merchants Association	1

Attractive Downtown	1
Size of Community/commradery/relationships	1
Miami County Visitors & Convention Bureau	
City government supports downtown	
Government agencies located in area	
Churches	
Train	
Close proximity to other draws	
High owner occupancy	
Grocery downtown	
Clean/Clean streets	1
Lampposts	
Parental support	
Lots for kids to do	
Trophy nut	
Good health services	
Open space/not landlocked	
No Adult entertainment/bars	
Limited # of 1-way streets-good traffic flow	
Independent voice	
KITV	
Community involvement	
Personal responsibility/attractive	
Residents support local	
Neighborhoods	
Streetscape improvements	
Corporate/business & diverse industry supporters	
Strong service organizations	
Good roads	
Good community leadership	
Restaurants	
Financial institutions	
Miami County Foundation	
Good recruitment prospects	
Zoning enforcement	

Weaknesses

No public restrooms	8
Train traffic	7
Business hours	7
Lack of variety of businesses	7
Political games/personality conflicts	6
Parking – proximity/availability/# of spaces	5
Nightlife	5
Business mix	4
“Peak” traffic congestion	4
Pollution/smog control/truck traffic	3

Lack of retail space	3
Minimal upper floor development	3
History between city & downtown	2
Train traffic	2
Downtown building rehabilitation	2
Signage Regulations	2
Funding for building improvements	2
Deteriorating sidewalks/curbs	2
Old ≠ does not equal historical	2
No “Big-name” draw	1
Uninvolved significant stakeholders	1
Communication	1
Unfinished streetscape	1
Money- local/gov’t/lack	1
Open space for new development(landlocked)	1
Fire regulations/enforcement	1
Proximity to Airport	
Increase in Crime	
Regional image	
Perception of high taxes	
Foot traffic	
Outdated traffic signals	
Wayfinding	
Restoration Board	
Parking regulations/city code requirements	
Special use permits	
Streamline Regulations	
Vacant Lot Maintenance	
Knowledge of building code	
Street trees	
Out of date walking brochure	
Male shopping opportunities	
Need more color	
More attractive I-75 exit	
Community entrances	

Boundaries

North

City Park
Plum
Walnut St.

South

Broadway
Dow St.

East

Canal

West

I-75
Hyatt St.
RR
Railroad

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